Al-Franj: the Crusaders in the Levant | Saladin in the Holy Land

‘Having unified Syria and Egypt, Saladin focussed on expelling the Franks.’

Saladin’s prominence grew during the struggle for Egypt while Nur al-Din was still alive. After Nur al-Din’s death in 569 / 1174, Saladin spent 10 years fighting fellow Muslims and consolidating his army. Having unified Syria and Egypt, and following his capture of Aleppo in 579 / 1183, Saladin focussed on expelling the Franks. His first major victory against them was at the Battle of Hittin in 583 / 1187. This opened the way to advance with his army towards Jerusalem, which he captured later that year.



Name:
Painting

Dynasty:
Hegira 7th century / AD 13th century Ayyubid

Details:
The British Museum
London, England, United Kingdom

Justification:
The building that is partially seen in this painted battle scene represents a fortification similar to Damascus Citadel.



Name:
Damascus Citadel

Dynasty:
Hegira 599–610 / AD 1202–14 Ayyubid

Details:
Damascus, Syria

Justification:
The Citadel faced many sieges and attacks from rival powers.



Name:
Damascus Citadel

Dynasty:
Hegira 599–610 / AD 1202–14 Ayyubid

Details:
Damascus, Syria

Justification:
Damascus Citadel, the tower with its arrow slits.



Name:
Dinar (gold coin)

Dynasty:
Hegira 574 / AD 1178 Ayyubid

Details:
National Museum of Damascus
Damascus, Syria

Justification:

The coinage minted by Saladin records his name with that of his patron, the Abbasid Caliph al-Mustadi' (r. 566–75 / 1170–80), demonstrating his allegiance to, and the reciprocal acknowledgement of, the Abbasid court in Baghdad.